

Three Mopars at Four-Wide Nationals in Top-Five for Eliminations

- Mopar drivers set to take on unique NHRA Four-Wide eliminations at zMAX Dragway
- Don Schumacher Racing teammates Capps and Hagan qualify third and fourth for Funny Car Four-Wide eliminations
- Allen Johnson puts Magneti Marelli Dodge Dart fifth overall in Pro Stock qualifying
- Buddy Perkinson II qualifies Johnson's 2012 championship-winning Dodge Avenger ninth for his first Four-Wide Pro Stock experience

March 28, 2015, Concord, North Carolina - With just two chances to make the field for the sixth annual National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Four-Wide Nationals after rain washed out Friday's sessions, qualifying opportunities took place in unseasonably cool air temperatures in the 50s, setting the stage for a scramble to tame a newly renovated track hovering in the 80 degree range in order to find an appropriate set up and a good spot on the eliminations ladder. Funny Car drivers Ron Capps and Matt Hagan along with Pro Stock pilot Allen Johnson all found places for their Mopar rides in the top-five of their respective class for Sunday's competition.

The unique Four-Wide Nationals format will see the 16 qualifiers in each category split into four waves with competitors battling across all four lanes simultaneously at the purpose-built zMAX Dragway. Only the top two finishers of each wave will advance to the next round of eliminations. With only three heats necessary, the final elimination quad will determine the winner, runner-up and two semi-finalists.

Don Schumacher Racing drivers, Capps and Hagan both drove their new 2015 Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Cars into the top-five by qualifying third and fourth respectively. Capps who started the year with a runner-up finish to Hagan in the season opening event at Pomona and then won the Gatornationals title before heading to Charlotte, recovered from a 4.741 second first pass at 231.32 mph to post the second quickest run of the final session and take the third spot overall with a strong 4.051 sec /308.78 mph final lap.

"It's a team effort," said Capps giving credit to his crew chief Rahn Tobler and his crew. "They've made such strides making this car easier for me to drive and it's really showed. It's a dream to drive a car like I had in Gainesville and they gave me the same kind of car today."

Despite the strong qualifying effort, Capps' task for the first round of eliminations will be made a bit more challenging by finding himself in an all-Mopar grouping. He'll see teammates Jack Beckman, who qualified sixth with a 4.059/304.67 and earned two points for being second quickest in the first session, and Tommy Johnson Jr., who posted a 4.132 /251.20 before destroying a new body on his first lap and ending up 11th. The DSR trio will be joined by Paul Lee and his 2010 Dodge Charger R/T. The No.1 qualifier position went to Courtney Force for her 4.011/312.35 pass.

As points leader and winner of the first two events of the season, Hagan also had a solid final run in his Mopar Express Lane Dodge setting the third quickest time of the session with an elapsed time run of 4.055/ 306.60 to secure his fourth place spot. He'll meet up with John Hale and his 2015 Dodge Charger R/T and competitors Cruz Pedregon and Tim Wilkerson in the first quad.

"They've got a new surface out there, it's anyone's ball game," said Hagan who is looking to help extend the new Mopar body's win streak to four in a row and also post his fourth career win a zMAX Dragway. "I think the track will continue to get better and better as we go and hopefully we can improve if we get to run three times tomorrow. I'm excited about it. We qualified well here, we're in the top half of our group and we'll get to pick our lane tomorrow. The format here at the Four-Wide is kind of crazy but my lights are okay and you just have to concentrate up there

and adapt to the situation. We have a great racecar and I feel like we'll have a long day tomorrow."

In Pro Stock action, the "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart of Allen Johnson made two solid passes, running an elapsed time lap of 6.513/213.77 and a 6.527/213.74, to end up with the fifth quickest lap despite taking a somewhat cautious approach to a new track, cool temperatures and limited qualifying runs. Johnson's fifth place qualifying position put him in a quad with fourth place qualifier Greg Anderson (6.502/213.64), Jonathan Gray (6.545/211.73) who was 12th, and fellow HEMI-powered Dodge Dart driver Gaines (6.683/206.48) who ended up in 13th on the eliminations ladder.

"Green track, cold track, lost yesterday's two warm-up runs; these are all factors that made it so you had to be conservative today," Johnson said. "Everyone was for that first run today, with the exception of those cars whose teammates ran up early. On that first pass we were probably too conservative but we got down the lane cleanly and then got decent runs out of both cars on our second outing. We'll try to tune up that run for tomorrow. I feel like we're in a pretty good spot."

The second car Johnson referenced was that of driver Buddy Perkinson II who joins the Four-Wide fun aboard the Johnson & Johnson Racing team's 2012 championship-winning Dodge Avenger for this weekend's event. Perkinson's first run didn't go quite as planned when an electronic glitch surfaced after the burnout and hampered his efforts to get his first four-wide pass under his belt.

"We had a wiring issue on that first run but went back, changed a bunch of stuff, and must have got it because everything worked fine on the last run," said Perkinson who posted a clean 6.528/212.49 for the ninth quickest run overall on his final attempt. "It was actually a pretty good run considering we were in the dark 100% and made it into the top ten. It feels good to get rid of the butterflies I had with losing two sessions because of rain and the issue in the first session. Nobody wants to go into race day with just one qualifying pass but I think we're fine. I finally got my first taste of the four-wide staging and saw how the lights work and had a .037 second reaction time. I'm going to be in a pretty tough group for the first round so it should be pretty interesting."

Perkinson's ninth place qualifying position groups him with No.1 qualifier Chris McGaha (6.474/213.70), eighth place qualifier Shane Gray (6.525/211.99), and defending world champ, Erica Enders-Stevens, who qualified 16th without making a run down the track.

Coverage of the NHRA Four-Wide Nationals eliminations rounds will be broadcast live on ESPN this Sunday, March 29, starting at 2 p.m. EDT.

2015 NHRA Championship Points Standings (following the NHRA Four-Wide Nationals Qualifying):

PRO STOCK (season wins in parentheses)

1. Jason Line – 319 (1)
2. Rodger Brogdon – 316 (1)
3. Drew Skillman – 266
4. Chris McGaha – 263
5. Erica Enders Stevens – 248
6. Greg Anderson – 239 (1)
7. Shane Gray – 199
8. **Allen Johnson (Dodge Dart) – 176**
9. Larry Morgan – 154
10. Vincent Nobile – 153
13. **V Gaines (Dodge Dart) – 125**

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. **Matt Hagan (2015 Dodge Charger R/T) – 303 (2)**
2. **Ron Capps (2015 Dodge Charger R/T) – 279 (1)**
3. Del Worsham – 245
4. Robert Hight – 210

5. **John Hale (2014 Dodge Charger R/T) – 204**
6. **Tommy Johnson Jr. (2015 Dodge Charger R/T) – 199**
7. Courtney Force – 198
8. Alexis DeJoria – 193
8. Cruz Pedregon – 186
10. Tim Wilkerson – 177
13. **Jack Beckman (2015 Dodge Charger R/T) – 128**

About Mopar Brand

Mopar (a simple contraction of the words Motor and PARTs) was trademarked in 1937 with the launch of an antifreeze product, but it truly made its mark in the 1960s during the muscle-car era. From Mopar Performance Parts to enhance speed and handling for both road and racing use, the brand soon expanded to include technical service and customer support.

Today, Mopar is FCA's service, parts and customer-care brand and distributes more than 500,000 parts and accessories in over 150 markets around the world. With more than 50 parts distribution centers and 27 customer contact hubs globally, Mopar integrates service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance dealer and customer support worldwide. Mopar is the source for genuine parts and accessories for FCA brands.

Mopar parts are engineered together with the same teams that create factory-authorized specifications for FCA vehicles. This offers a direct connection that no other aftermarket parts company can provide. A complete list of Mopar accessories and performance parts is available at: www.mopar.com.

Mopar-first Features

Mopar has introduced numerous industry-first features including:

- Vehicle-information apps: first to introduce smartphone vehicle-information applications, a new channel of communication with customers
- Electronic owner manuals: first to introduce traditional owner manuals in a DVD and brief user-guide format. First to offer complete vehicle-information kits in Spanish
- Wi-Fi: first to offer customers the ability to make their vehicle a wireless hot spot
- Wireless charging: first to introduce in-vehicle wireless charging for portable devices
- Electronic Vehicle Tracking System (EVTS): first to market with interactive vehicle tracking device that sends owner a text when vehicle is driven too fast or too far based on pre-set parameters
- wiADVISOR: first to provide factory-connected tablet technology in the service lane for instant vehicle diagnosis
- wiTECH: first to support vehicle diagnosis and software updates leveraging off-the-shelf personal computers and a dedicated wireless tool network
- 2011 Mopar Challenger Drag Pak: first to introduce a 500-plus cubic-inch V-10 drag-race package car

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